

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-61 (Cancelled)

62. (Previously presented) A method of operating gaming devices interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:

- selecting a plurality of the gaming devices;
- using the network to track the amount of money played on the selected gaming devices;
- allocating a predetermined percentage of the money played to a bonus pool;
- initiating a bonus period after the bonus pool exceeds a predetermined level;
- providing data establishing criteria to cause a bonus to be paid from the pool via one of said selected gaming devices upon the occurrence of a predetermined event;
- storing the data in a memory connected to a controller associated with only one of the gaming devices;
- transmitting data indicative of gaming device activity from the gaming device to the controller;
- transmitting a pay command from the controller to the gaming device upon the occurrence of the predetermined event only if a bonus period has been initiated; and
- paying the bonus via the gaming device responsive to receipt of the pay command.

63. (Previously presented) The method of claim 62 wherein the predetermined event comprises a predetermined transaction at the gaming device.

64. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63 wherein said predetermined transaction comprises making a wager at the gaming device.

65. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63 wherein said predetermined transaction comprises a handle pull at the gaming device.

66. (Previously presented) The method of claim 62 wherein providing data establishing criteria to cause a bonus to be paid from the pool via one of said selected gaming devices upon the occurrence of a predetermined event comprises providing data causing a

bonus to be paid from the pool via one of said selected gaming devices only if predetermined minimum gaming device play is achieved.

67. (Previously presented) The method of claim 62 wherein said predetermined event comprises transmission of a pay command from the host computer to the controller.

68-76 (Cancelled)

88. (Previously presented) A progressive gaming system comprising:
a central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize;

a first plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a first progressive prize, based on first contributions from said first plurality of gaming terminals;

a second plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a second progressive prize, based on second contributions from said second plurality of gaming terminals;

said central computer receiving information regarding said first contributions and transmitting information, when said first progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and

said central computer receiving information regarding said second contributions and transmitting information when said second progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminals;

wherein the same said central computer calculates both the amount of said first progressive prize, when said first progressive prize has been won, and the amount of said second progressive prize, when said second progressive prize has been won.

89. (Previously presented) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, wherein said first and second pluralities of gaming terminals have at least one gaming terminal in common.

90. (Previously presented) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, further comprising a cluster controller which receives contribution information from at least some of said first plurality of gaming terminals and transmits said information regarding said first contributions to said central computer.

91. (Previously presented) A progressive gaming system comprising a central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize;

a first plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a first progressive prize, based on first contributions from said first plurality of gaming terminals;

a second plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a second progressive prize, based on second contributions from said second plurality of gaming terminals;

said central computer receiving information regarding said first contributions and transmitting information, when said first progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and

said central computer receiving information regarding said second contributions and transmitting information, when said second progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminal;

wherein each of said first plurality of gaming terminals, following play on said gaming terminal, provides an output indicative of a result of said play;

wherein said central computer repeatedly receives, stores or transmits information indicative of a decision as to whether said first progressive prize has been won; and

wherein said decision is independent of said result of play in any of said first plurality of gaming terminals.

92. (Previously presented) A progressive gaming system as claimed in claim 91 wherein a decision that said first progressive prize has been won is made only after an event selected from the group consisting of a push of a button, a predetermined result from a spin of a wheel of fortune, and a draw of a predetermined token from a plurality of tokens.

93. (Previously presented) A method for providing a progressive gaming system implemented using central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize, the method comprising:

receiving, in said central computer, first information indicating contributions towards a first progressive prize from a first plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said progressive prize;

receiving, in said central computer, second information indicating contributions towards a second progressive prize from a second plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said second progressive prize;

transmitting from said central computer, when said first progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and

transmitting from said central computer, when said second progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminals.

94. (Previously presented) A method, as claimed in claim 93, wherein said first and second pluralities of gaming terminals have at least one gaming terminal in common.

E-1 95. (Previously presented) A method, as claimed in claim 93, further comprising: receiving, in a cluster controller, contribution information from at least some of said first plurality of gaming terminals and transmitting said information regarding said first contributions from said cluster controller to said central computer.

96. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 93, further comprising: providing output, by each of said first plurality of gaming terminals, following play on said gaming terminal, indicative of a result of said play; and repeatedly transmitting information to said central computer indicative of a decision as to whether said first progressive prize has been won wherein said decision is independent of said result of play in any of said first plurality of gaming terminals.

97. (Previously presented) A method, as claimed in claim 96 wherein a decision that said first progressive prize has been won is made only after an event selected from the group consisting of a push of a button, a predetermined result from a spin of a wheel of fortune, and a draw of a predetermined token from a plurality of tokens.

98. (Previously presented) Apparatus for providing a progressive gaming system implemented using a central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize, the apparatus comprising:

means, in said central computer, for:

receiving, first information indicating contributions towards a first progressive prize from a first plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said first progressive prize; and

receiving, second information indicating contributions towards a second progressive prize from a second plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said second progressive prize; and

means, in said central computer, for:

transmitting from said central computer, when said first progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and

transmitting from said central computer, when said second progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminals.
